

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

LETTER XVIII.

*Enclosing a Letter to the MEN OF KENT, on the subject of the rejection of the Addresses to the Royal Family, which took place at Maidstone on the 17th of June.*

Botley, 22d June, 1816.

The following Letter, in which I have gone to the full stretch of my *English tether*, will speak pretty plainly for itself; but, there are some explanations, which it will be necessary for me to give here, in the way of introduction, or, at the end of the Letter, in the way of Postscript: I prefer the former.

This affair of *obtaining Addresses*, on the occasion of the Marriage, is of an importance, of which you, the people of America, can have no idea. The Guelphs have long been hated by the people of England in general; or, at least, *very much disliked*. The affair of the Duke of York; that of the Duke of Cumberland (which I will explain more fully another time;) the life-long conduct of the Prince of Wales; the affair of his wife; the story of the Child, still believed by many; the grasping disposition of the Queen; the hoarding of immense sums (lately come to light) by the King; and, in short, the increasing knowledge of the age, together with the increase of our burdens, have, all together, produced a feeling towards the whole family, which, at the very best, may be called *contempt*. The family know this very well; and they have been putting in play all sorts of efforts (*except those that would be of use*) in order to retrieve their character with the people. They have been making themselves Patrons and Presidents of Bible Societies, School Societies, all sorts of Charitable Institutions; they have made themselves Members, or Heads, of Scotch Societies and Irish Societies, of Magdalen Societies and Lying-in Women Societies; they have figured at Operas for the benefit of the bodies of the Poor, and at Methodist Meetings for the benefit of their souls. In short, they have been tramping about seeking for occasions to make themselves what is called *popular*;

or, rather, to make themselves a little less unpopular than they long have been. But, all this has been in vain. John Bull, beast as he is, or has been, (I hope I may begin to say,) is not any longer to be imposed upon, apparently, by tricks like these. Disappointment and misery have done much in opening his eyes within the last twelve months. The progress of political light has been, and is, very slow in England: but, if John Bull be slow to move, he is also very slow to *turn*, when he is once put in motion and is bent upon any course. He was a long time humbugged with the story of the "good old king;" but John has now discovered that the whole of the long reign of this "good old king" has been a war against the liberties of mankind, and has, at last, brought this nation itself into a state of misery, which it is no longer in the power of man to disguise or to palliate. The English people, who love their country very ardently, who are very proud of it, and who cannot, and never will, endure the thought of its becoming any thing less than the greatest country in the world, begin to fear that this, their beloved and admired country, will be enfeebled, and finally humbled and disgraced, if things be suffered to go on in the present manner. To the irritation, occasioned by misery, is, therefore, added the anxiety of patriotism; and, the general feeling of the country is, that, in order to restore England to happiness, and to preserve her power and her fame, *some great and important change in the manner of governing must take place*.

If, indeed, the GUELPHS had thrown up a considerable portion of the immense sums which they had drawn from the public, it is possible, that they might have retrieved themselves a little with the nation; but, this is what they could not do without losing all the retinue of mercenary wretches whose support they purchase with those sums. It is true, that they would do very well in exchanging this vile support for the honourable support of the people; but, they do not perceive this. And, besides, they have so many persons and so much power to contend with, in the band of Boroughmongers, one of whose objects always is to keep the Royal Fa-

mily as much as possible dependent on themselves, without, however, exposing them to a degree of hatred that would put the whole system in danger. Of late, the Royal Family have been hated by some, and despised by others, a great deal more than agrees with the interests of the Boroughmongers, who, though they make a mere Puppet of the family, it is a puppet which they *cannot do without*. It serves them in all sorts of capacities:—umbrella, parasol, fire-screen, mask, blind, shield, sword, bullet: in short, it is every thing to them in the way of *tool* and of *weapon*; and, therefore, though they take care that it shall always be subservient to themselves, it is by no means their interest to destroy it; no, nor even to suffer it to sink *very low* in public estimation.

To keep up its character with such a man as the Prince Regent at the head of it, was, you will easily allow, a very difficult business indeed. That seems to have been given up in despair, the character of his Royal Highness being left in the hands of the Rev. Sir Bate Dudley, Baronet, who acts in the double capacity of head chaplain and newspaper-paragraph writer. Abandoning thus, to its fate, the character of the father, the Boroughmongers seem to have thought it necessary to excite *a new feeling of loyalty in the country*, and to direct that feeling towards the young lady who is to be Queen, and who, in point of character, could not, at any rate, stand in an unfavourable light with the country. They, therefore, appear to have conceived the notion of *playing her off* upon John Bull. So that, as soon as the marriage had taken place, they set to work to call Meetings and to get Addresses. They were safe enough; success was sure to attend their efforts as long as they confined themselves to corrupt Corporations and Boroughs, where ninety-nine out of every hundred of the parties concerned either received bribes from, or held places under, the Government. But, the Addresses of these vermin were not worth much; and the Boroughmongers knew that they were not worth much. Yet it was a ticklish thing to appeal to the people at an open County Meeting, especially after (as I told you some Numbers back) the wedding itself had been received by the people with such extraordinary indifference. There was, as I told you before, no visible feeling excited

by it in the country, except that of indignation at the grants of money made to the parties. As I told you before, there were no illuminations; no balls or feasts given throughout the country; no marks of interest exhibited anywhere. The mobs, which, for a day or two, followed the new-married couple about London, were composed of persons hired and marshalled for the occasion, by the means of the runners of the General Post-Office, in the same manner that I have before described to you, in speaking of the mobs that used to huzza the “good old king,” as he passed along to and from the House of Lords in his *bullet-proof coach*.

All this indifference, this scorn, this uncommon coldness of the people, which, doubtless, excited not a little uneasiness at Court, rendered it the more necessary that addresses should be obtained from the *Counties* if possible; all the Corporation and Borough addresses not being, as I observed before, worth a straw. After long hesitation, therefore; after *six weeks* of balancing, the attempt was made in the County of Kent. In more than one half of the counties, the proposers of such Addresses would have run a risk of broken bones. In Nottinghamshire, Huntingdonshire, Norfolk, Leicestershire, Yorkshire, and several others, the addressing Boroughmongers would certainly have met with the treatment of Hudibras when he went to put an end to the bear-bating; but in Kent, with no less than four large Dock-yards, several immense Barracks, and the Cinque-Ports, where there is little of manufacturing going on, and where there is as little of misery known, perhaps, as in any county in England, it appears to have been thought that there was no danger of meeting with resistance. Nevertheless, a Meeting was not to be ventured upon, even in this county, without uncommon precautions; and without, especially, the *union of both the parties* in bringing the Addresses forward. Sir William Geary is a Whig, and the other Member, Sir Edward Knatchbull, a downright prostituted toad-eater of the Ministry, put into Parliament by the mere weight of the corrupt influence of the Government at the several seaports, and arsenals, and barrack districts, and towns in the county of Kent. These men hate one another mortally; but both wish to support the system of corruption; and, therefore, they both



came forward together upon this occasion to endeavour to cajole the people. You will see, and I trust you will see with pleasure, that they were completely foiled in their intention.

As the matter now stands, the situation of the Guelphs is infinitely worse than it would have been if this attempt had never been made. As if for the purpose of consoling them, a great crew of *dissenting ministers of all sorts of sects*, have carried up a congratulatory Address upon the subject of the marriage; and, they have, it seems, been introduced to the Prince by the Secretary of State, and have had the honour to *kiss his hand*! It is a curious thing to observe how naturally *Priests*, of whatever kind they may be, ally themselves with corrupt political power! What! have these men forgotten, that this same Prince of Wales, only the other day, *refused even to speak a word* in behalf of the persecuted Protestants in France? But, these priests know very well what he is and what his whole family are. They have not ignorance to plead in their justification. The fact is, that they know that their priesthood yields them a comfortable living without work, and that the great mass of corruption and oppression, called the government, favours their views and their interests by tending to keep the people in brutal ignorance. However, I will engage, that that cunning courtier, Lord Sidmouth, who introduced these priests to the Prince, knows very well how to estimate the worthlessness of their cant, compared with that approbation of the people, which it was intended to obtain at Maidstone.

I will detain you no longer with this introductory matter, but submit to your perusal my Letter to the Men of Kent, as it will be published in London on this day next week.

WM. COBBETT.

TO

THE MEN OF KENT,

*On their late rejection of Addresses of Congratulation to the Royal Family, on the subject of the Marriage of the Princess Charlotte of Wales.*

Botley, 22d June, 1816.

The victory obtained for the nation by the defeat of the projected Peace Property Tax has been looked upon, by some per-

sons, as being very great; but, supposing it to have been all that was expected, it was not, for the nation, a victory a thousandth part so important as that, which, to your honour, and to the shame and confusion of the friends of corruption, was obtained at Maidstone on the 17th of this present month of June. The victory over the Income Tax was, in great part, the work of the selfishness, and, indeed, the injustice of those, who had been amongst the foremost to begin, and to prosecute, that war, which had occasioned the enormous debt, which demands enormous taxes to pay the interest of it, and an enormous standing army to cause those taxes to be collected. In those who urged on that war, and who caused the money to be borrowed for the purpose of carrying it on, it was unjust, it was base as well as unjust, to shake off from their own shoulders any portion of that load which they had thus contracted. Therefore, the victory obtained in the case of the Income Tax, was of very questionable merit, when considered in conjunction with the motives which led to it; but, the victory gained by you at Maidstone is unequivocally honourable to the persons by whom it was obtained, and there is no doubt in my mind, that it will lead to great national benefit.

The account of that memorable day's proceedings reached me first through the channel of a hireling daily London paper, called the *Courier*. This account has since arrived at Botley in the *Kentish Chronicle*, and also in the *Maidstone Gazette*, by the proprietors of all which papers, you, who so manfully rejected the proposed Addresses, and who therein gave a proof of your good sense and your true English feeling, are abused in a most insolent manner, being called by these hireling scribes by all sorts of names, descriptive of worthless and brutal men.

It is my intention to show, during the present Address, that this abuse is wholly unjustifiable; that your conduct was marked by public spirit and sound sense; and, that the charge of being guilty of low and despicable conduct belongs, in no sense, to you, but, in every sense, to your adversaries.

Before, however, I enter upon the examination of the matters presented to me in the account before mentioned, and on the audacious commentaries of the mer-

cenary writers to whom I have referred, the great interest of the subject appears to me to demand a brief statement of the circumstances which had occurred, previous to the day of your meeting, and relative to the subject of that meeting. Because, unless those circumstances are taken into view, neither your views nor the views of your adversaries, neither your merits nor their demerits, can be fully understood, especially by persons in *other countries*; for, my honest Fellow Countrymen, your conduct on the 17th of June at Maidstone; the decision which you, on that day, made, was the decision of every Englishman of sense who really loves his country, who exults in her true glory, and who mourns over her shame; and, be you assured, that there are very few nations in the civilized world, who do not still look with deep interest in order to discover what are the real sentiments, upon topics like the present, of the real people of England.

Notorious, therefore, as the circumstances are to us, in this Island, it appears to me necessary to state, that, about six weeks ago, the Princess Charlotte of Wales was married to a German, called the Prince of *Saxe-Cobourg*; that the Parliament have passed laws to give, at the expense of the people, to this new-married couple, in the first place, 60,000 *pounds* for what the Minister called an *out-fit*. Then 60,000 *pounds a year* as an income to live upon. Besides this, it had been intimated, that about 60,000 *pounds* more would be wanted in order to purchase an estate, as a place of residence in the country, which intimation is now actually proceeding upon by the Parliament, and the estate is reported to have been actually purchased, and is to be paid for, it is said, out of the sale of *Crown Lands*, as they are called, but which *Crown Lands* are really the people's lands, as no lawyer, who has any reputation to lose, will, I am sure, dare to deny. Besides this, the husband, *in case of the Princess's death*, is to have 50,000 *pounds a year*, paid to him by the people of England, *for the remainder of his life*! In addition, it has been stated to us, that this German Prince has been appointed a Field Marshal in the English army. I do not know whether he is to have any *pay* on this account, but this is a circumstance which is by no means to be overlooked. An Act of Par-

liament has been passed to *naturalize* this Prince, or, as it is called, to make him a *denizen*.

Bearing these circumstances and transactions in mind, we must also bear in mind, that, at the very time when the Parliament were passing the Acts to compel the nation to pay the aforesaid sums, they were day after day, and week after week, sitting in deliberation on what they themselves called "*the distresses of the country*." And, my worthy Fellow Countrymen, do we not well know, do we not all feel that our country then was, and that it still is, in a state of undescribable distress? Have not members of Parliament given an account of whole Parishes deserted by those who formerly employed the poor, and who paid the poor-rates? Have not others given an account of the distressed and miserable people, not being able to obtain relief from the Parish, wandering about like Banditti, seeking the means of satisfying their hunger; have not other Members described the country as being deserted by the rich, who were seeking, by flight to foreign countries, to get rid of their share of the burthen of the National Debt, and that of supporting the army, the Royal Family, and that of maintaining the poor? And have not other Members described the honest, the laborious, the virtuous part of the community, to be in such a state as for some of them to have requested of a Member of Parliament to get them sent to *Botany Bay*, as the means of *bettering their lot*? Nay, do not the "*Special Commissions*," and the dreadful preparations consequent thereon, now going on *in the town of Ely*; do not these proclaim, with awful voice, the deplorable and desperate state to which this nation, this industrious, laborious, persevering, and provident people have been reduced?

It is not I, my Fellow Countrymen; it is not you, brave men of Kent, from whose lips this description of our country has proceeded; no: it has come from the lips of the Members of Parliament themselves; aye, from the lips of the Members of that very House, the two contending parties in which most cordially joined in voting the immense sums above mentioned, and in which House the most decided approbation of these grants of this distressed nation's money was heard from the lips of that very Mr. Brougham, who,



in conjunction with Mr. Wilberforce, has been taking such infinite pains to better the condition of the natives of Africa who labour in the West-India plantations, and whose life, though it be not what I wish it to be, is a life of ease and of plenty compared to the present life of an English labourer; and, what ought to be still more dear to man than ease and plenty, it is a life of *freedom* too, compared to that of the present life of an Englishman, if that doctrine be sound, which has, with regard to you, been now promulgated by the abject slaves of power, through the hireling press. For, as we shall by and by see, these men have the impudence to assert that it is only the Nobility, the Clergy, the Gentlemen, the Freeholders, and people in Office, who have any right at all, upon any occasion, to express an opinion upon any public matter, and that all the rest of the nation, which rest of the nation consists, I believe, of more than ninety-nine out of every hundred men; that all this rest of the nation, that ninety-nine out of every hundred Englishmen, are to be considered as nothing more than mere dumb animals; than mere beasts of burden or of draft, or, at best, than mere slaves; while (shall not the insolent words be crammed down their throats!) men of Title, Parsons, Placemen, Pensioners, and even Foreigners, ought to have the deciding on whatever shall concern our characters, our means of living, our personal liberty, and our lives! Yes, my Friends of Kent, let us hope, at any rate, that we shall not all be put under ground like dogs, before we have seen the men who make use of language like this, brought to a due sense of the baseness and the infamy of their conduct. In spite of all that we see around us; in spite of the miseries of all sorts, into which we are plunged, let us hope that England, so long famed for the industry, the mutual confidence, the love of liberty, the hatred of oppression of her sons, and renowned, more than for any thing else, for the struggles which those sons have, at various times, made in defence of human rights; let us hope, that, in spite of the dismal gloom that hangs over us, England is not doomed to put up quietly with such audacious insolence as this.

Many things have occurred of late to revive and to cherish this hope; but, as

for myself, I seriously declare, that nothing has occurred, for many years, or, at least, within my recollection, so cheering, as to public matters, as your rejection of the Addresses proposed at Maidstone, in which rejection you have set an example to the whole nation, an example of the utmost importance; and, you have, at the same time, by your resolute pronouncement of the single syllable NO, spoken thunder to your adversaries, who, by all kinds of shifts and tricks, are endeavouring in vain to recover from their consternation.

In proceeding, now, to rebut the attacks of your calumniators, I shall first insert *a narrative of the proceedings* of the 17th, according to the materials furnished me by the newspapers above mentioned, and by letters which I have received from Maidstone.

It appears, that, according to the usual custom, a requisition had been presented to the sheriff to call *a Meeting of the County*, and that, in compliance with this requisition, that gentleman appointed the Meeting to take place on the 17th of June, at the town of Maidstone, that being the most central town in the County, and being, indeed, the *County-town*. The account of what passed has been published in the *Kentish Chronicle* of the 18th of June, in the following words:

“Maidstone was yesterday a scene of such disgraceful confusion, as cannot be recorded without the most painful feelings, by any man who wishes for the welfare and happiness of England. It is already known that a requisition, most respectfully signed, and embracing the names of gentlemen of opposite opinions in political life, had been transmitted to the High Sheriff of this county; in consequence of which he appointed a public meeting to be held, simply for the purpose of congratulating the Royal Family on the marriage of the Princess Charlotte of Wales. Yesterday was the day fixed for this meeting to take place, and the following is a faithful report of the proceedings of the assembly.

“Though the meeting was to have been holden at twelve, it was nearly one o'clock before the High Sheriff had repaired to the spot, accompanied by several noblemen and distinguished gentlemen of the county, when he opened

“ the business in the usual form, by stat-  
 “ ing his concern that, owing to some sort  
 “ of accident, the advertisement for the  
 “ occasion had not appeared in the Kent-  
 “ ish Gazette, though it had not been  
 “ omitted in the other Kentish papers.  
 “ Among the noblemen and gentlemen  
 “ who were on either side of the High  
 “ Sheriff, we noticed the *Marquis Cam-*  
 “ *den*, Lords *Darnley*, *Clifton*, *Sidney*,  
 “ and *Thanet*, Sir *Edward Knatchbull*,  
 “ Sir *William Geary*, Sir *Thomas Dyke*,  
 “ the *Hon. Colonel Harris*, and some  
 “ clergymen. Waggoners were drawn out  
 “ in the usual form, but *all the precau-*  
 “ *tions* used could not prevent the popu-  
 “ lace from pre-occupying two of the  
 “ waggons; and this disarrangement pre-  
 “ viously to the commencement of the  
 “ proceedings, had some effect in facili-  
 “ tating the objects of those persons who  
 “ had *evidently come* for the sole purpose  
 “ of *stirring up resistance and noise*.

“ LORD CLIFTON rose to address the  
 “ Meeting, (after the resolution for the  
 “ first Address had been read by the High  
 “ Sheriff and put.) He began by obser-  
 “ ving, that he esteemed it particularly  
 “ fortunate to be his lot to present him-  
 “ self to the meeting on so propitious  
 “ an occasion, and on a subject which  
 “ authorized him to look forward to their  
 “ unanimous approbation. The resolu-  
 “ tion he had to support was one whereon  
 “ he anticipated the vote of every man;  
 “ it was to carry, in the first instance, an  
 “ Address of Congratulation to his Royal  
 “ Highness the Prince Regent on the aus-  
 “ picious nuptials of his only child,  
 “ with a Prince *whom she herself* had  
 “ esteemed *worthy of her choice*, and  
 “ whose great and amiable qualities gave  
 “ the surest pledge of beholding *conjugal*  
 “ *happiness again seated on the throne*.  
 “ He wished, indeed, that the motion had  
 “ fallen to better hands than his, since it  
 “ related to that event which would prove  
 “ a *blessing* to the inhabitant of the  
 “ *palace and the cottage*—an event so  
 “ calculated to rejoice every lover of  
 “ *freedom*, and who had the *blood of an*  
 “ *Englishman still flowing in his veins*.  
 “ The Consort of our Princess was de-  
 “ scended from an ancient and illustrious  
 “ house, whose *religion was in unison*  
 “ *with our established faith*, and who in-  
 “ volved us in none of those *continental*  
 “ *arrangements*, which were adverse to

“ *our interest*. Had we formed the alli-  
 “ ance which was in contemplation *two*  
 “ *years ago*, it might have exposed us to  
 “ circumstances most unpropitious to us,  
 “ by being vexed and harassed with dis-  
 “ putes as to territorial rights, which we  
 “ should have been called upon to de-  
 “ fend, and which had unfortunately cost  
 “ us so much money and men. It was  
 “ also a circumstance as gratifying as it  
 “ was new, for he believed it had *no pa-*  
 “ *rallel in the history* of the world, that a  
 “ person of the elevated rank of the  
 “ Princess Charlotte *was united to a*  
 “ *husband of her choice*. Respecting the  
 “ character of the Prince so selected  
 “ by her, it was happily the lot of  
 “ Prince Leopold to be spoken of by  
 “ all with universal admiration.—[Cries  
 “ of ‘NOT ALL HERE.’]—Affable  
 “ and courteous, he was well qualified  
 “ to obtain the good will of all classes of  
 “ men; while he had even now manifested  
 “ his foresight and independence, by re-  
 “ fusing to accept of any rank or title  
 “ that would interfere with his resolution  
 “ of keeping aloof from the different  
 “ parties in this country. We ought,  
 “ indeed, to *thank Providence* for so  
 “ *fine* a prospect of domestic happiness  
 “ and *national security*—[LAUGHING  
 “ AND HISSES;] and we had only to  
 “ regret, that, amidst such scenes of *mirth*  
 “ and *pastime*, it was the fate of an  
 “ afflicted sovereign to be unable to  
 “ *participate in the joy which was poured*  
 “ *upon his subjects*. Happy were the  
 “ royal pair, indeed thrice happy, if  
 “ they knew their happiness.—The Noble  
 “ Lord concluded by moving the ad-  
 “ dresses:—the first, offering to the Prince  
 “ Regent the sincere congratulations on  
 “ the marriage of his daughter, and as-  
 “ suring his Royal Highness of their  
 “ being sensible of those blessings which  
 “ this country had enjoyed under the  
 “ sway of his Illustrious House; the  
 “ second, to her Majesty the Queen; and  
 “ the third,—to Princess Charlotte and  
 “ Prince Leopold, with an expression of  
 “ hope that their union would be benefi-  
 “ cial to the nation at large, while pro-  
 “ ductive of their domestic peace.

“ COLONEL HARRIS said, he most cor-  
 “ dially concurred with the sentiments of  
 “ the Noble Lord, and begged leave to  
 “ second the addresses that had been  
 “ proposed to them.



" Upon the High Sheriff now putting  
 " the Address to the Prince Regent,  
 " and the *majority of hands proving to*  
 " *be adverse* to it, no declaration was  
 " made by him, on which the populace  
 " called out, 'WHERE'S THE MAJO-  
 " RITY?'—That proposed to the Queen,  
 " and those also to the Princess Charlotte  
 " and Prince Leopold, experienced the  
 " same fate, with mutterings of 'SEND  
 " UP A PETITION FOR EMPLOY-  
 " MENT FOR THE POOR,' and 'WE  
 " CAN'T AFFORD TO KEEP FO-  
 " REIGNERS,' from the deluded and  
 " disaffected in all quarters.

" [Here one of the populace had the  
 " *effrontery* to remark, that only two  
 " hands were held up, except by the High  
 " Sheriff and his friends. Sir Wm. Geary  
 " then challenged this man as to his con-  
 " dition in life, when he turned out to be  
 " a journeyman watchmaker, who was  
 " only a lodger in the town.]

" SIR W. GEARY now endeavoured, if  
 " possible, to *reclaim* the populace to  
 " something like *sense*, reminding them of  
 " the manner in which *he had represented*  
 " *them*. He declared it as his opinion  
 " that no one qualified to enter into the  
 " merits of the question could offer a sub-  
 " stantial ground for rejecting the ad-  
 " dresses. None was attempted to be  
 " offered, even by those who clamoured  
 " them down; and, for his part, he felt he  
 " was securing the liberties of his country  
 " in maintaining the present family in the  
 " succession to the throne. He would  
 " finally call upon them as men of Kent,  
 " *zealous for the honour of their country*,  
 " to pause well before they passed a  
 " judgment which he was confident would  
 " be *condemned by every British heart*.  
 " What had been the conduct of the Prince  
 " Regent in the transaction on which it  
 " was proposed to address him? Finding a  
 " man of honour, and to whom his daugh-  
 " ter was attached, he had *acceded to the*  
 " *feelings of her heart*, regardless of terri-  
 " torial advantages, and acted as the *kindest*  
 " *of parents*. Did they wish to oppose  
 " such a character as Prince Leopold, *be-*  
 " *loved by every one else*? He would de-  
 " sire the question to be again put, as he  
 " wished to see if they could conscien-  
 " tiously reject it; for if such a decision  
 " were to go out to the world, he was cer-  
 " tain it must *disgrace them* with every  
 " British heart.

" SIR EDWARD KNATCHBULL said, that,  
 " after the manly and constitutional  
 " speech of his colleague, he could only  
 " say that the line of conduct just recom-  
 " mended, was the only one to be adopt-  
 " ed by them. Had they forgotten the  
 " circumstance of *our good old King*,  
 " when he *once passed their town*, being  
 " borne upon the hands and with the  
 " hearts of all; but what would be his  
 " grief, could he understand they were  
 " refusing to approve of *his son's pursu-*  
 " *ing his political steps*, and even refusing  
 " to congratulate that son on the prospect  
 " of *continuing the royal line*.—[HEAR,  
 " HEAR!]  
 "—Where was the man present,  
 " who would not desire to be congratulat-  
 " ed by his friends on *marrying his own*  
 " *daughter well*? The motion had been  
 " seconded by an Honourable Friend of  
 " his (Colonel Harris, of the 73d) who  
 " this very day twelvemonth was fighting  
 " in their cause—fighting in the *Battle of*  
 " *Waterloo*, where *he bled*, and of whom  
 " those who survived with him never  
 " spoke but in the *highest terms*. He  
 " should again call upon them to support  
 " the addresses by one unanimous vote.

" Amidst an increase of confusion and  
 " calls, the three Addresses were then pro-  
 " posed together by the Sheriff, and *lost*,  
 " and no advocate for loyalty could succeed.

" SIR WM. GEARY was desirous of  
 " submitting an alteration, although he  
 " was confident that the subject of the  
 " Addresses was one upon which there  
 " could be no objection, except a man  
 " were the enemy of his country. He  
 " would propose to strike out the words  
 " 'Meeting at Maidstone,' (which alter-  
 " ation they themselves *would regret at*  
 " *another time*,) then to let the Address  
 " be circulated widely, and signed by  
 " those who approved of the object of  
 " them. [UPROARIOUS CLAMOUR,  
 " WITH CALLING OUT, 'THEN  
 " IT WOULD BE A SECRET AD-  
 " DRESS.']—Clamour should not prevent  
 " him from supporting what he conceived  
 " to be just; he was *a sailor's son*, and  
 " not *easily to be shaken*. Formerly he  
 " had appealed to the state of the poll;  
 " and he would now appeal from the *un-*  
 " *deliberating noise* of that meeting, to  
 " the *good sense* of the county. He  
 " should therefore move, that the meet-  
 " ing do adjourn.—[LOUD CRIES OF  
 " NO, NO! GO ON.]

"THE HIGH SHERIFF having consulted  
"with the Noblemen and Gentlemen  
"near him, declared the meeting to be  
"dissolved.

"Those who really were competent to  
"deliberate and vote then adjourned to  
"the Bell Inn, where Marquis Camden  
"was called to the Chair, the High  
"Sheriff not thinking it proper for him-  
"self to occupy that seat. After a va-  
"riety of opinions here delivered in a de-  
"sultory way, it was resolved, on the mo-  
"tion of Sir William Geary, which was  
"seconded by Sir Thomas Dyke, that the  
"Addresses should be transmitted for sig-  
"nature to the principal towns in Kent,  
"and returned through Mr. Scudamore, of  
"Maidstone.—Every one was confident  
"of the result. Sir Wm. Geary said, he  
"should feel it a particular duty to ac-  
"company the presentation of them, to-  
"gether with the High Sheriff, and he  
"hoped that all the Noblemen and Gen-  
"tlemen now present would honour them  
"with their company too.

"Nothing like rioting was attempted  
"on the part of the persons who figured  
"on the rejecting side during the first  
"meeting, though it was afterwards re-  
"marked that some menace had been ut-  
"tered by some one, and though matters  
"might have assumed a more serious as-  
"pect, if the meeting had been prolonged.  
"The fact plainly is, that it ought either to  
"have been adjourned, or dissolved, the  
"moment the spirit of contumacy was  
"seen."

Thus, my friends of Kent, we have be-  
fore us the hireling account of the matter.  
Upon their own showing, the "*disgrace*"  
belongs solely to your adversaries. Here  
was "*no rioting*," they themselves say.  
*No violence* of any kind. The questions  
were proposed to the Meeting; the Meet-  
ing rejected them; and, all that was, in  
point of form, amiss at the Meeting, was,  
that the High Sheriff did not *declare the*  
*decision*, and then dissolve the Meeting,  
the business of the day being ended.

But this is not a *true* account of what  
passed. It is a partial account, at least,  
as will, indeed, easily be believed by  
every one, who observes the *disposition*,  
which the editor of this enslaved news-  
paper has displayed. A letter, which I  
have received from near Maidstone, dated  
on the 18th instant, gives an account of  
some particulars, which it was a base act

in the Editors of the Kentish Chronicle  
and Maidstone Gazette to omit to notice,  
especially as it has been alleged against  
the Men of Kent, that they gave *no rea-*  
*sons*; that they *stated no grounds* of ob-  
jection. My Correspondent's letter con-  
tains the following relation of particulars.

"SIR—You will see by the paper,  
"sent for your information this post,  
"(the Maidstone Gazette,) the proceed-  
"ings of a County Meeting, held at this  
"town yesterday. The statement being,  
"as far as it goes, tolerably accurate, it  
"will be needless for me to trouble you  
"in detail. Suffice it to say, that, al-  
"though it is asserted (*falsely*) that no  
"person of respectability took any part  
"in the Opposition, great numbers were  
"highly gratified at the result, as, indeed,  
"all the real friends of freedom must be.  
"John Bull was inexorable; each of the  
"addresses was negatived by a show of  
"hands ten to one; every subterfuge was  
"resorted to on the part of the proposers  
"of the addresses, but all was unavailing.  
"Sir William Geary, the only popular  
"man on the hustings, made no impres-  
"sion on the Meeting; the universal cry  
"was, '*we will vote no addresses*;' '*you*  
"are all tarred with the same brush.'—  
"One man exclaimed, '*I have nine Chil-*  
"dren, and every morsel of bread that  
"goes into their mouths is taxed to pay the  
"Marquis of Camden's salary;' another  
"said, '*if the Noble Marquis is anxious*  
"for the Royal Family, let him give his  
"salary to support them.' On the Sheriff  
"putting the question for adjournment,  
"such was the panic, that he *did not put*  
"the contrary question.—The Nobility  
"actually *sneaked* away, like dogs with  
"burnt tails, adjourning to do business  
"at a Public-house! Here, to his praise,  
"the Sheriff refused to take the Chair;  
"declaring the Meeting, for which the  
"requisition was signed, to be dis-  
"solved."

Such, then, taking both accounts toge-  
ther, we will look upon as a pretty fair  
representation of what took place upon  
this memorable occasion. The hirelings  
of the press say, that your conduct was  
disgraceful; that it cannot be contem-  
plated without the most painful feelings  
by any man who wishes for the welfare  
and happiness of England. Sir William  
Geary is represented to have said, that  
your conduct would be condemned by



every British heart, and that it was disgraceful to you, and showed you to be persons destitute of sense. I am precisely of a contrary opinion. I think that your conduct was honourable to you; I thank you in the name of my circle of friends for the example that you have thus set to the country; and, instead of your being under the guidance of folly, it appears to me, that your conduct, from first to last, was marked by sound sense, while that of your adversaries was, perhaps, the most foolish, as well as the most insolent, ever witnessed, at any thing under the name of a county meeting in any part of England.

But, I will not, like your calumniators, content myself with bare assertion. I will prove what I say; or I will be content to pass for the equal of the Editors of the Kentish Chronicle and Maidstone Gazette.

You are represented as having laughed and hissed at the speech of Lord Clifton. His Lordship told you that the Princess herself had chosen her husband; that he was the man of *her own choice*; that it was a circumstance as gratifying as it was new to see a person of the elevated rank of the Princess Charlotte married to a man of her own choosing; that this was without a parallel in the history of the world. Now, in the first place, how came Lord Clifton to know this fact; *who* told him that the Princess Charlotte did really and bona fide fall in love with this German Prince; that it was an affair of *the heart*, as that wise man, Sir Wm. Geary, afterwards told you it was? In the first place, I say, we must doubt very much, whether the Princess Charlotte did really make these gentlemen her confidants as to this very important matter. Of course, we must look upon what they said, in this respect, as worthy of no attention at all. In the next place, supposing the fact to be true, it may speak very highly in praise of the husband, that the Princess Charlotte should prefer him to all the men in England; this may be something for Germans and Germany to be proud of; but, really, one cannot very well see how it can be a thing "to rejoice every one who has the blood of an Englishman flowing in his veins." Far be it from me to find fault with this royal lady's choice. I know no more about her husband than

I do about her. She may, for aught I know, have shown very excellent taste in yielding to him, at almost first sight, a heart, which, as we must infer from the speeches of Lord Clifton and Sir Wm. Geary, had remained wholly insensible to every thing that she had seen in England; her taste in this matter may have been perfectly good; there may, for aught I know to the contrary, have been no man in England, or, at least, with English blood in his veins, worthy of her affection or regard; there may, for aught I know to the contrary, be something in Germans a vast deal more worthy of love and admiration than there is in any young man of English birth and parentage. But, my Lord Clifton, admitting all this to be so, though we must commend and admire the correct taste of her Royal Highness, you must excuse me, my good Lord, if I do not regard the circumstance as something of which an Englishman ought to be proud; and of this opinion appear to have been the discerning and honest men of Kent. The next topic brought forward by the Addressers, appears to have been, the excellent character of the new-married husband. Lord Clifton told you of his great and amiable qualities; Sir Wm. Geary told you that he was beloved by every one; Sir Edward Knatchbull told you that the Princess Charlotte was well married; and my Lord Clifton asserted, that it was, "happily, the lot of Prince Leopold to be spoken of by *all* with *universal* admiration." Lords, amongst their privileges, may, perhaps, possess that of setting the rules of grammar at defiance. I will, therefore, leave this sentence of Lord Clifton to enjoy that privilege, and proceed to observe, that you, with as much judgment as pith, gave, in three short words, a complete negative, and also a complete refutation, of his assertion. "NOT ALL HERE," was your answer; and, certainly, nothing could be more true in point of fact, nothing could be in better taste, or in point of argument; and yet, the blundering, bungling baronet, who talked about his being a sailor's son, and about your undeliberating noise, had the folly to propose, at the Bell Inn, the circulation of the Addresses through the county, because, as he said, you had rejected those Addresses without argument! There was more argument in the three words which you uttered in answer to

Lord Clifton's assertion, than there was in all the speeches made by your adversaries during the whole day. It may be very true that the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg is a most beautiful, most amiable, most virtuous, and most wise person ; but it is false to say that he is spoken of with admiration by *all* ; for, if the word *all* is to be understood as meaning no more than all the people in England, it must be well known to every body, that not one person out of ten thousand have ever seen him or ever will see him ; that not above one out of every three or four hundred thousand, will, in all human probability, ever hear him speak ; that not above one or two out of every million will ever know any thing of his qualities, good or bad ; and that, therefore, it was manifestly false, as well as insulting, to the meeting, to say that this gentleman was beloved by *every one*, and that he was spoken of with admiration by *all*. These were assertions which were neither true nor decent ; they contain falsehood in substance, and courtier-like insolence in manner ; and they deserved the reproof which they received at your hands.

It is said that you laughed and hissed when Lord Clifton told you, that "we ought, indeed, to thank Providence for so fine a prospect of domestic happiness and national security." But you do not appear to have laughed when he told you, that you had only "to regret, that, amidst such scenes of mirth and pastime, it was the fate of an afflicted sovereign to be unable to participate in the joy which was poured on his subjects." You did not laugh at this, men of Kent ; this, foolish as it was, was not an observation to laugh at. What scenes of mirth and pastime did his Lordship allude to ? The scenes exhibited in almost every parish in England, where the farmers are removing off to jail, and their labourers to the poor-house ? The scenes exhibited in Ireland, where the taxes are, in many instances, collected under the guardianship of the bayonet, and where, throughout whole districts, the people are shut in their houses from sunset to sunrise ? Or, was it to the scenes of mirth and pastime exhibited at this moment in the counties of Suffolk, Norfolk, Huntingdonshire, and Cambridgeshire, and particularly at the town of Ely ; was it to these scenes of mirth and pastime that his Lord-

ship alluded ; were these the scenes of joy in which he wished the king to be able to participate ? You appear to have received these observations of his Lordship with the disdain which they merited. Joy, indeed ! What joy, I should be glad to know, has been "poured forth" upon you, or upon any part of the people of England ? Joy ! who amongst us can feel any thing like joy, while we behold millions of our countrymen in such misery as never was experienced before in this country, in any age, or under any sovereign ; for when was it before known of England, that her people, rich as well as poor, were seeking to flee from her soil in all directions, in order to find out a spot of earth where they might be less miserable ? Lord Clifton, perhaps, and Lord Camden, and Lord Sydney, and the rest of those persons who were forward in endeavouring to inveigle you into an approbation of their Addresses ; these persons, perhaps, may have had joy poured out upon them, in the shape of places and pensions ; but, as to the people in general ; as to those who work to raise the means of paying the taxes, no joy have they had poured out upon them.

As to the *Domestic Happiness*, of which his Lordship told you there was so fine a prospect, I will only say, that, taking all circumstances into view, I am really surprised that even Lord Clifton should have entangled himself voluntarily in the meshes of so very ticklish a subject. Yet, Sir William Geary must go a little further, and, without the least apparent necessity in the world, talk about the conduct of the Prince Regent, who, he said, "finding a man of honour, and to whom his daughter was attached, had acceded to the feelings of her heart, regardless of territorial advantages, and acted as the kindest of parents." Why, one would really think that Sir William, in his "endeavours to reclaim you to something like sense," had, for the time being, at any rate, suspended the operation of every thing like sense in his own mind. For, besides the slippery ground upon which he had chosen to tread, with regard to the parental feelings, how excessively, how exuberantly foolish it was to talk about the Prince's "regardlessness of territory" in the husband of his daughter, at the very moment when a Bill was before Parliament, the object of which Bill was, and is, to provide a landed estate for the husband of the Princess at the expense of the people of England ; exclusive of the out-fit, and the pension, and the reversionary pension mentioned in the former part of this address. These facts, so well known as they were to every man present, would, one



would have thought, have been sufficient to restrain, from touching upon such a subject, even the tongue of Sir William Geary. If, indeed, the Prince Regent, out of regard for the feelings of his daughter, or from any other motive, had lopped off part of his own expenses, and had given the part so lopped off, to this amiable German, in order to supply the place of that want of territory, or income, of which the sprightly Baronet chose to speak; if His Royal Highness had thus provided a fortune for the young couple, even then we might have very reasonably claimed the right of sharing with his Royal Highness in the merit of having been generously "regardless of territory;" but, to cry up this regardlessness in him as an act of wondrous generosity and kindness, while we were called upon to supply the husband with territory, was something so insulting to the understanding of the meeting, that the gentleness of your conduct upon the occasion appears to me to have been truly wonderful. For my part, if I had been present when the observation was made, I could no more have held my tongue than I could have bit off my own nose.

And pray, my worthy friends of Kent, what could Lord Clifton mean by telling you that in this marriage we were so blessed, that even the *collages* were to be blessed by it, and that we ought to *thank Providence* for the fine prospect of "*National Security*" that it gave us? What could his Lordship mean by these words? Is there common sense in supposing that our *security as a nation* can, in the smallest degree, depend upon this marriage? If so, we were in a state of insecurity before the marriage took place; and should, of course, be replunged into that state, if the marriage were to be put an end to by the death of the husband, or that of the wife, or by any event which might produce a separation! Now, really, though I am by no means disposed to underrate the character of the husband of the Princess Charlotte, I must be permitted to observe, that John Bull, that famous John Bull, that swaggering John Bull, that fighting John Bull, that squandering John Bull, who has had all Germany in his pay, ten times over, is come to a pretty pass, or, as we Hampshire people should say, has brought his hogs to a fine market at last, if it be really true, that his NATIONAL SECURITY depends upon the life, or the disposition, of a German Prince, and of a German Prince, too, to whom John is to pay a pension for life! Amiable as you please, Sir William Geary; beloved as much as you please, Sir William Geary; admired as much as you please, my Lord Clifton. Say, Gentlemen, all that you please in praise of the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, and I will never contradict you. Down upon your knees and kiss his hand, and I will never interrupt you. But, whenever you take it into your wise heads to assert that the *security of England* depends upon the will or upon the life of this Prince, or upon that of any other Prince, I will

always say, that you are very low-minded, or very weak-minded men. When this expression was made use of at Maidstone, the people laughed in your faces, and well they might; they hissed too, at the same time; and the assertion was a subject for hissing as well as for laughter: It was at once ridiculous and insulting.

Having now shown, as I think, pretty clearly, that you, the people of the County of Kent, were right in your decision, upon the occasion alluded to, I now proceed to observe upon the conduct of those who brought forward and endeavoured to support the addresses, than which conduct, any thing more foul has seldom been witnessed. The Meeting had been called on a requisition of the persons who proposed the addresses; it had been convened by the Sheriff accordingly; the addresses themselves purported to be the addresses of the Nobility, Gentlemen, Clergy, Yeomanry, Freeholders, and *Inhabitants* of the County of Kent. All the addresses were full of expressions of joy at the marriage, and of expectations of great national benefits to be derived from it, together with acknowledgments of the vast advantages which the nation had derived from the sway of the House of Brunswick. Now, the main thing to observe here is, that the Addresses purported to be the addresses of the *Inhabitants* of the County of Kent; and, therefore, there was no person living in the County of Kent, who had not a perfect right to vote and to speak, if he chose, at this meeting. It was, therefore, the extreme of insolence in Sir William Geary to pretend that the persons who opposed the Addresses, had no right to be there. There was no creature, in whatever rank of life, being within the County of Kent, who had not as much right to speak and to vote as Sir William Geary or Lord Camden had; and, indeed, a much greater right than Lord Camden, or Lord Sydney, or any of the others who were present, and who receive money out of the taxes, that is to say, out of the produce of the people's labour. One of the persons, who, it appears, made the most pointed observations in opposition to the addresses, was, we are told, a journeyman watch-maker; and it is added, very significantly, that he had lived in Maidstone not above *two years*, and was only a *lodger*, into the bargain! Very well! and what then? Was not this man an "*inhabitant*" of the County of Kent; and if he had not a right to speak and to vote, with what propriety could these addresses be called the addresses of the "*inhabitants* of the County of Kent?" This journeyman watch-maker was an inhabitant as well as Sir William Geary, and if the voice of the former was to be shut out and stifled, it was a falsehood, it was a mean piece of cheatery, to pretend that the addresses were coming from the inhabitants of the County of Kent.

The party, the aristocracy, or rather, the Oligarchy, who afterwards retired to the Bell

Inn, should, if they had intended not to let the inhabitants in general have any share in deciding upon the questions; if this had been their intention, as it certainly was, they should have called a meeting of themselves, and not of the *inhabitants*. They might then have had their meeting as snugly as possible. They might then have carried their addresses with the most wonderful unanimity. But, this was not what they wanted; it was not an address from a set of Courtiers, Colonels, Boroughmongers, sinecure placemen, pensioners, and taxgatherers; it was not an address from a band like this that was wanted. The movers of these addresses knew very well the light in which *their* congratulations would be viewed. No; what was wanted was an address from the inhabitants, that is to say, from the people at large of the County of Kent. And, as this was the first County which had been tried upon this tender subject, every effort appears to have been made in order to ensure success. There have been addresses enough from Corporations, Boroughs, and Colleges. There have been people enough strutting up from all parts of the country in Corporation gowns and bag wigs. There have been Doctors and Proctors, and all sorts of Dignitaries; the sinecure and pension list have all passed in review before the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, with their addresses and congratulations. There have been Scotch Counties, too, I believe; or, at least, there easily might be, unless the *people* should be called together in that country, which I believe they never have been yet in a fair and open manner.

But, all this was poor stuff; all this was of no value. All the applause and the affection that came from these quarters was something like that which one receives from one's *own family*. It was all in the family; all in the regiment, as Sir Francis Burdett once observed. This, therefore, was not what was wanted. What was wanted was to get the *people* to congratulate; to get the *people* to express their happiness, their joy, their gratitude, upon this occasion. The *City of London* was said to have taken the lead in this affair of congratulation; but, it was not the city of London that congratulated. It was merely the *members of the Corporation* of London. So far from its being the *people* of London, it was not even the *livery* of London. A *Common Hall* would have expressed the sense of the Livery; but even this had not been ventured upon; and as to the people of Westminster, there had been no meeting of any sort in that City upon this occasion. In short, there had been a meeting of the people nowhere; the first attempt was made at Maidstone; and as I observed before, every trick seems to have been resorted to, to make this attempt succeed. Lord Clifton talked about the only child of the Prince, and about the *true English feeling* of Prince Leopold! He then descanted at large upon the inestimable blessings which John Bull had enjoyed under

the illustrious House of Brunswick. Sir William Geary, with a taste peculiar to himself, represented the German Prince as a person beloved by every one except the majority of the meeting, and spoke of the match quite in the style of a love-born novelist. Sir Edward Knatchbull, in a strain still more affecting, called upon the people to remember that our *good old King once did Maidstone the honour to pass through it*, and bade them consider seriously, what would be his grief *could he now understand* that they were actually refusing to congratulate his son on the prospect of continuing the Royal line! This, I suppose, was one of those *arguments*, which the Bell Inn society were discontented at not hearing answered! But Sir Edward having once mounted his stilts; having once, as he appears to have thought, made a way into your hearts by the powers of his eloquence, did not think proper to stop here. He took occasion to play off the battle of Waterloo upon you, by observing, most aptly, that Colonel Harris, who had seconded the addresses, was, that very day twelvemonth, fighting in *your cause*, in the battle of Waterloo, where he *bled*. To be sure, this had a great deal to do with the subject before you! Sir Edward Knatchbull appears to be a man of excellent taste as to the selection of his topics. The Hon. Colonel Harris being a friend of Sir Edward, and having bled at Waterloo, were, I suppose, amongst those cogent *arguments* in favour of the addresses, which you were censured for not answering.

But, if this cajolerie, these low, these pitiful, these worse than mountebank tricks, this despicable cant; if these excited your disgust, and made you hold in utter contempt the persons by whom they were played off, what must have been your feelings, when you saw them, after their attempts at cajolerie had failed, endeavour to extort a vote from your fears? What must have been your feelings when you heard Sir William Geary calling out to know the *name* of the journeyman watchmaker, with evident intention to *mark him out*; when you heard the same gentleman assert, immediately afterwards, that no man would oppose the addresses, who was not an *enemy to his country*; and, especially, when you heard him utter the mean threat of making Maidstone *no longer the place for holding public meetings*!

However, in spite of both cajoling and bullying, you persevered in rejecting the addresses, and in that perseverance you rendered a most signal service to your country, if it were only by proving to other counties, and to other assemblages of the people, that if they will but make use of the trifling rights which are still left to them, even that will be of some use.

It is impossible for me, my friends of Kent, to know how the Oligarchy felt when they were sneaking away to the Bell Inn; but I know very well how I myself should have felt



upon the occasion, and I know that I should have been very glad to have escaped from the band at the expense of a broken head. Arrived at the *Bell Inn*, the gentlemen appear to have been as bold as so many pages of the Royal Household. There they found that *deliberation*, which they affected not to meet with out of doors, where Sir William Geary pretended that there was nothing but undeliberating noise. Now, my friends, mark the impudence of this assertion. Pray mark the impudence of these men; and I pray you punish it, by your loudly-expressed censure upon some future occasion. The addresses were brought forward: they were proposed by a Lord; they were seconded by the son of another Lord; they were then regularly put to you by the Sheriff; they were put to the whole meeting; they expressly purported to be the addresses of the inhabitants of the County of Kent. And what did the meeting do? What did the people of Kent do? Why, without any prompter; without any leader; without any Speech-maker; the people themselves, and of themselves, when they were asked if they would send up those addresses, said NO. What could be more regular? What decision could be more fair or more conclusive? When the Sheriff put the question to the people, and said, "as many of you as are for these addresses will please to hold up your hands;" it appears that only two persons, besides the *band*, held up their hands. But when the contrary was put to the meeting, a forest of hands sprung up in an instant! Yes, my friends of Kent, those were the hands; it was that description of hands; it was those big and hard fists, and the like of them, which won the battles, by sea and by land, to perpetuate the memory of which millions are to be expended on monuments! That was the sort of hands which it was desired to see raised up all over England, in approbation of the recent marriage, and of the expenses connected with it! This was the sort of hands, these grimy and muscular fists, which raise the bread we eat, and which make the covering for our bodies and the houses we live in! This was the sort of hands that it was the object to see raised in this cause all over the country; and not the little soft dough-like hands of Doctors, and Proctors, and Placemen, and Pensioners. The difference between these two sets of hands is perfectly well understood, I assure you; and, though the project has been defeated by your good sense and public spirit, it was a project that reflected no small credit on the mind of the inventor.

The rejection of the addresses in this instance, was purely the work of the people; and on this account the decision was extremely interesting. The band consisted of both the political parties. Sir Edward Knatchbull is notorious for being a thorough-paced Pittite. Sir William Geary is as notorious for being what is called a thorough-paced Whig. These

are the two members who represent the county in parliament. That is to say, one of them represents the Kentish IN faction, the other represents the Kentish OUT faction; but, as you have now most clearly proved to the world, neither of them, nor both of them together, represent you, the people of Kent. This is a fact to be borne in mind. There were both the factions present. Both the factions were for the addresses. The two factions quarrel very frequently. They abuse each other, at times, in the most indecent strain; but when the object was to carry an address, in which both of them were interested, and most deeply interested too, in a way which I need not explain, or, at least, which I do not think it right to explain here; in such a case, they could forget their mutual abuse, and most cordially co-operate in the endeavouring, first to cajole you, and next to bully you, into a compliance with their wishes. You have given the two factions a lesson. They may send their addresses round the country to be signed in the parlours of parsons, placemen, pensioners and taxgatherers; they may send them to be signed in the custom-houses, the excise-offices, the barracks, and the martello towers; but never, as long as they have any memory left, will they tender addresses like these to a meeting of the men of Kent.

A writer in the *Courier* newspaper has observed, that it was wrong to call a meeting in the *Street*; that it should have been held in the *Council Chamber*, or *Shire Hall*. And that nobody should have been admitted to it, except the nobility, the gentlemen of large estates, the clergy, the considerable freeholders, and the persons in office under the government. This he says was the practice of our ancestors. That this last assertion is a very daring falsehood most of you know. But, it is not to detect the falsehoods of a writer like this that I have introduced him. You know that this *Courier* is a decided hireling. You know that such a print only speaks as it is prompted. I have therefore introduced this writer and his article principally to show you how the phisic works which you administered on the 17th of June.

It is false to say that addresses and petitions were by our ancestors signed in holes and corners; it is false to say that any *free man* in England, that is to say, any man who was not a bondsman or a vassal; it is false to say that any such man was in former times excluded from the exercise even of the right of choosing members of parliament. But, if it be right to shut out the people; if the people have nothing to do with meetings of this sort, what impudence is it in any of these factions to pretend that they have the voice of the people with them! Let the factions meet in their holes and corners; let them draw up and pass their addresses in their Shire Halls or their barracks. This is all very well; but let them not pretend, let them not have the impudence to pretend, that they are carrying up

in these addresses the sound of the voice of the people. Let them begin their address thus: "We, the placemen, pensioners, clergy, "contractors, silk-gown gentlemen, tax-gatherers, and all other persons living out of "the taxes, in the county of Kent, humbly "beg leave to offer our most sincere and heart-felt congratulations," &c. &c.; let them begin their address in this way, and I have not the smallest objection, nor can you, I presume, to their meeting in any Chamber, or any Hall that they may choose to fix on. For my part, if they were to meet for this county, for instance, and I happened to be going by the place at the time, I do not say that I should not stop to look at them; but, it would be without any interest on my part the least in the world. I should stop and look, and laugh for a minute or two, as we frequently do at the mountebanks and tumblers, who do us the favour to stop and amuse our children in the villages which lie along the roads in this part of our county, as they are travelling to and from the great fair at Portsdown. Such meetings would be perfectly harmless. Their addresses would carry upon the face of them their fair character, and a true representation of the persons from whom they proceeded. These "Shire Hall" gentry, or barrack gentry, might put what resolutions they pleased; they might pass without opposition whatever they liked to draw up; but then, what use would it be to carry up such addresses? That Prince or Princess must be stupid indeed, who would not at once perceive that the praises of such people only were the strongest proof of a general feeling, or opinion of a precisely contrary character.

The writer in the *Courier*, who, I beg you to believe, is a person of very considerable importance, and one who is the mouth-piece of another person who has a great deal to say in your county; this writer says, that the matter must not go off so; he says that the public voice, means the voice "of select bodies, corporations, men of property, or of office, such as the clergy," &c.; and he adds, that "laws were passed twenty years ago, forbidding any meeting of more than forty persons, unless called by magistrates." Then, he accuses your magistrates in the present case of *vanity*, in wishing to have a large meeting; and tells them that they should have had their meeting of a select sort. Now, my friends of Kent, this writer, who pretends that our *ancestors* met in holes and corners, and excluded the common people from all political meetings, was, it seems, talking of those famous *ancestors* of ours, Pitt, Dundas, and their associates, backed by Sir Edward Knatchbull, and his associates, who passed, twenty years ago, those laws, which this writer so much commends, and which were called the *Gagging Laws*; but which laws will stand in need of being *revived*, in order to answer this writer's purpose, seeing that as far as relates to public meetings, the said *Gagging Laws*

have expired; and also seeing, that the people may now lawfully meet and deliberate upon politics without limitation as to numbers, and without the consent of Magistrate or Sheriff. However, let these laws be passed again, if Castlereagh, and Canning, and Sir Edward Knatchbull, and Sir William Geary, and the rest of the Parliament choose. Let them pass the laws again if they like. There will be no deception; no cheater, no fraud, either towards us or towards the world in the passing of such laws, or in the enforcing of them; we shall all understand that clearly. What I object to is the *fraud*; the *base and false* pretence, that it is the *people of England* that say this, or that like that, when they say the contrary of the one every day and every hour of their lives, and when they hate and detest the other with every vein in their hearts. This is what I object to. This knavish species of misrepresentation; this cheating of the people out of their voices; this filthy, this hateful trick, which has been so long practised, and with a degree of success not less destructive to the liberties of Europe than to the liberties and happiness of England herself.

By this grand trick the several bodies of the people have been played off against each other; first each particular body against all the other bodies; and then all the bodies, except one, against one body alternately. Thus, if these addresses had been carried at Maidstone, away would have gone, all through the country, a most pompous account of the proceedings in the *county of Kent*. The "nobility, gentry, clergy, yeomanry, freeholders," would all have been *dropped* quietly. Not a word would have been said about them in these pompous accounts. They would have been put aside as so much rubbish; and nothing would have been talked of, but the *Kent county meeting*; the meeting of the *people in Kent*; the addresses of the *people of Kent*; the loyalty of the *people of Kent*. The placemen, and pensioners, and taxgatherers would have been sitting quietly sniggering and chuckling at home, while this gross misrepresentation of the sentiments of the people of Kent; while the impudent imposture; while this scandalous piece of cheater was running throughout the country, and setting all the other counties in motion, very probably to follow the *example*, as it would have been artfully and basely called, of the PEOPLE OF KENT! It would have been in vain that you yourselves knew the falsehood and the baseness of the misrepresentation; it would have been in vain that your hearts burnt within you to proclaim the real truth, and to warn the rest of the counties against being imposed upon and cheated out of their voices, and misrepresented and calumniated in the same way; it would have been in vain for you to endeavour to recal the occasion of preventing the misuse of your name; it would have been too late for you to lament; ninety-nine hundredths of the *press* is in other hands than



yours; and, perhaps every county in England, one after another, would, in consequence of the example of Kent, have been induced to send up similar addresses. From this the country has been preserved by your discernment and resolution; for not only will your example *now* not do harm; it will do good; it will operate in a different direction, and if a similar trick should be attempted in any other county, it will, I have not the smallest doubt, meet with a similar fate. Let the addressers; let those who live upon the taxes, try their hand all along the coast and towards the west. Let them try their hands in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somersetshire, or let them go into Berkshire; or, in short, into any other county; let them call a fair and open county meeting, and they will see how disgracefully they may be driven from the field.

So far, however, is the mercenary and most corrupt writer in the *Courier* from being of this opinion, that he asserts "that *another meeting of the County of Kent should, nay, must be called.* The county cannot (he says) sit down under the *stigma* of having refused to congratulate the Princess Charlotte on her marriage; it cannot sit down under so gross an insult, under so gross an *outrage on its character.*" This writer does, however, observe that, in case of another meeting, "*more care must be taken respecting the attendants!*" Very true, and perhaps he means there shall be an attendance of gentlemen from the barracks, in red or blue coats, on the backs of horses, and with carabines in their holsters, and swords in their hands. If this be his meaning, or if the yeomanry cavalry are to attend armed and accoutred; if this be his meaning, and if his recommendation be acted upon, which is by no means impossible, you will, I dare say, leave Sir William Geary to deliberate as long as he pleases, and will wish all the parties joy of their address.

But as I imagine, that you do not think it any "*stigma*" on your county to have rejected the fulsome and ill-timed addresses which were brought forward; as you are very well content with the light in which the late meeting places your character; so, I venture to predict that your adversaries will not again risk their characters by calling another meeting for a similar purpose. It has been said that there could be *no reason* for rejecting the address; that the address could be disagreeable to no man, who is capable of understanding it; that it was such as could have been disapproved of only by the lowest and most ignorant of the country boors; and Sir William Geary expressly said, that it was such that no man could oppose it. Now, my fellow countrymen, I think that I understand the meaning of words as well as Sir William Geary does. I am sure that I clearly understand the meaning of these addresses; I do not think that I am one of the very lowest and most ignorant of the country boors; I am sure I love my country as well as Sir William Geary

does. And with all this I say, that, if I had been at the meeting, if there had been only my single hand to be held up against the addresses, held up it should have been. But *why?* In the first place, because I feel no joy at all at the marriage, being of opinion that it is in no way whatever calculated to promote the good of this country; and, in the next place, I have an objection to the general, sweeping, unqualified, hyperbolical, fulsome eulogium on the House of Brunswick, and that, too, at the expense of the English nation, just as if England was never any thing at all until this family was put upon the throne, and as if its very existence depended upon the breath of the persons belonging to that House. I have no objection to make use of respectful language towards the king and his family when an occasion calls for my addressing them, but really I cannot talk in a strain, that would seem to argue, that I think so basely of my country, and, of course, of myself. As the Prince Regent told the Citizens of London some time ago, that he did not think the occasion called for his interference in behalf of the suffering protestants of France; so I should have deemed it quite answer enough to these addressers, to have said, that I did not think, that the occasion called for our interference in the way of congratulation to the Royal Family.

But, if I had been present at the Kent meeting, I should not have been contented with a simple negative. It would have been impossible for me to have suffered those gentlemen to retire to the Bell Inn, there to enjoy their one-sided deliberations, without an attempt to induce the meeting to adopt some petition, address, or remonstrance, upon the subject of the heavy burthens to which the nation is subjected, in consequence of the recent marriage. It is very well known, that, in the act of Parliament passed for raising the property-tax to ten per cent. a clause was introduced for exempting from that tax the money which the King had in the funds. It is also well known, that, in 1811, Commissioners were appointed to take care of the King's private property. I am to presume, therefore, that the King has private property; and though I do not name the sum (not having any positive proof of the amount of it) I may fairly presume that the amount is very considerable. If, therefore, the Prince Regent, the father of the Royal Bride, could not spare her any portion of the sums allotted to his uses; if the Queen could spare none of the sums allotted to her uses, at a time when prices had so much fallen, and when such very general misery prevailed throughout the country; still, at such a time, might not the purse of the nation have been saved a little by an application to those private means of the King, of which I have just spoken? What harm could it have done, if the King's private property had been made use of upon this occasion?

If, however, there had been nothing else, I should object to the greatness of the sums of

money granted upon this occasion. For this first year there will be a cost of very little short of 200,000 pounds. The newspapers tell us that the husband has ordered *fifty grey horses* to be bought for his use. I dare say this is false; but, at any rate, how are 60,000 pounds for an out-fit to be spent, besides 60,000 pounds of salary, or pension? At the very time when these grants were making, thousands upon thousands of families were falling into ruin on account of the pressure of the taxes. And at the very moment that so many thousands of English people were almost actually starving to death for want of food, these immense sums are granted to a foreigner on account of his marriage with the daughter of the Prince of Wales! My friends of Kent, they always tell us that every grant and every sum that we complain of is a trifle; but, trifling as these sums are, there will be pretty nearly as much money expended on the Princess Charlotte of Wales and her husband during the first year of their marriage as will be raised to maintain *the whole of the poor in Hampshire during that year!* Is this a trifle, my friends? Well might you say that you could not afford to keep foreigners, when the fact is notorious, and has been so declared by the Members of Parliament themselves, that the increase of poverty and pauperism is such, that, unless it be speedily put a stop to, this country must be ruined and enslaved.

We are eternally told, by those whose interest it is to deceive us, that a government, to be good, must be *expensive*; must be costly; that the persons belonging to it must have monstrous sums of money given to them; must keep innumerable servants and horses; must live bedizened out in all sorts of finery; must be attended with guards dressed up in gold-laced clothes; and that a plain simple government, where the persons belonging to it have low salaries, is fit for nothing but to rule a country that is worth nothing, and that is not much larger than the Isle of Thanet. Now, my friends of the county of Kent, nothing can be more false than this. It is not only not true, but it is the very reverse of the truth, as is amply demonstrated in the case of the American Republic. That Republic has as many people in it as England has. It has finer cities than any in England or any in Europe. None, indeed, that are nearly so populous as London and Westminster, but, two, at least, which surpass in population, and infinitely surpass in all other respects, all the other cities in the British dominions. That republic has about fourteen hundred miles of Sea-coast; many rivers navigable more than a hundred miles up; that republic has, probably, more than a hundred seaports and harbours. It has very nearly as much commercial shipping as England, Ireland, and Scotland, all put together, and very nearly as many sailors. This, then,

is no *trifling* country; and, yet, the Chief Magistrate of that country; a country which has lately carried on, single-handed, a long and triumphant war against England; the Chief Magistrate of that country receives only 6,000 pounds a year; that is to say, my friends of Kent, only about a seventh part as much as your Lord Camden receives annually for his sinecure place of Teller of the Exchequer! And, observe, that the President of the United States, the Chief Magistrate of that great nation, a man of such talents, such experience, such tried virtue as he must be, receives, in the course of twenty years, no more than as much as the Princess Charlotte and her husband will receive in pension and in out-fit, during this one year! And, I beg you further to observe, that, as the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg is to receive 50,000 pounds a year for life, in case of the death of the Princess, the least possible sum that this nation will have to pay him, for fifty years, if he should live so long, and if the law granting the pension should remain in force, will be a sum more than eight times as great as that which our brethren in America will have to pay to the Chief Magistrate of the Country, the man who performs for them by their authority, and in their name and behalf, all the offices and acts of sovereignty.

Ah, my friends of Kent, need we wonder that there are so few paupers in that country? Need we wonder, that in that country the common labouring man, with a large family, may live well, go well clothed, and lay by 30 pounds sterling a year? They would fain persuade us, that these expenses of government are not felt by the poor. What, then, does not the poor man help to pay the taxes? Can he possibly open his mouth to eat until he has paid a tax? Does he not pay a tax upon his salt, sugar, tea, malt, soap, candles, and, indeed, does he not pay a tax on his bread, and meat, and cheese, and butter; for, have not the land, the horses, the leather, the iron, and every thing else been taxed, by the means of which his bread and meat have been produced? Yes, and the man who called out to Lord Camden, and told him that every morsel of bread that went into the mouths of his wife and nine children was taxed to help to pay his Lordship's salary, showed as much sense as he did spirit; and, had I been at Maidstone, I would rather have gone home and have dined with that brave man and his wife and nine children off a morsel of that taxed bread, than I would have gone to dine upon the delicate fruit of the tax at the Bell Inn.

I have only to add my sincere thanks, in which I know I speak the voice of thousands upon thousands, to the men of Kent, for their spirited and sensible conduct upon this occasion, and to say that I think it an honour to subscribe myself *their countryman*.

WM. COBBETT.

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